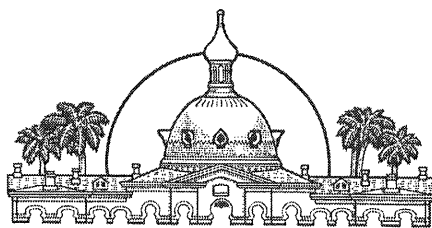


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HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

***UNCLOGGING PIPELINE SECURITY: ARE THE LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY
CLEAR?***

Chairman Carney, Ranking Member Bilirakis and members of the subcommittee, we appreciate the opportunity to testify today.

I am Ron Rogers, the Assistant Chief - Administration for Hillsborough County Fire Rescue in Hillsborough County, Florida where we are meeting today. I am testifying today on behalf of the citizens of Hillsborough County. I have 29 years experience in Emergency Service experience in Hillsborough County (nine as the Special Operations Chief). I am a past Chairman of the Association for Search and Rescue (FASAR) and a past Chairman of the Florida Association of HazMat Responders (FLAHR).

As has been discussed in other testimony, Hillsborough County has a significant chemical pipeline network that presents the possibility of a major release at any time. Since July of 2007 there has been close to 100 incidents involving pipelines reported in Hillsborough County and a number of full Hazmat responses. In many cases there were evacuations, road closures and disruptions; fortunately there was only one serious injury and no fatalities in these incidents. It is important to note that more than ninety percent of these incidents were from Natural Gas distribution lines and almost all of these were construction related accidents. In the near thirty year history of the ammonia pipeline there have been many minor releases and two major releases, one in May of 2003 and again in November of 2007. Both of these releases were the result of intentional individual actions.

The pipeline damaged in these incidents is one of two owned and operated by the Tampa Bay Pipeline Company. The pipeline that was damaged was constructed in 1981, the other in 1979. It is six inches in diameter, approximately 30 miles long and carries liquid anhydrous ammonia from a storage facility in Port Sutton to chemical manufacturing facilities in Hillsborough and Polk Counties. In the past two and a half years we have worked closely with other County agencies and Federal authorities to improve our ability to respond to these types of pipeline incidents and work towards preventing them all together.

One area that continues to need improvement is on the documentation of training and medical monitoring that complies with Federal standards and joint interagency training. During the 2007 incident, a lack of training documentation prevented us from allowing the pipeline operators personnel from assisting in the hazard area. This issue was noted on Page 5 and 6 of the PHMSA Notice of Probable Violation Proposed Civil Penalty and Proposed Compliance Order dated May 7, 2008. Based on the previous issues, we would like to offer the following recommendations:

Training - It is the recommendation of Hillsborough County Fire Rescue that regular hands on training be required that requires the owners of transmission pipelines to conduct regular hands on training with the HazMat teams that would normally respond to an incident involving a release from their pipeline.

Training Documentation - It is the recommendation of Hillsborough County Fire Rescue that documentation be regularly provided to these HazMat teams documenting the completion of a minimum of Hazardous materials technician level training as outlined in 29 CFR 1910.120(q)(6)(iii).

Medical Surveillance Documentation - It is the recommendation of Hillsborough County Fire Rescue that documentation be regularly provided to these HazMat teams documenting the completion of a Medical Surveillance program in compliance with 29 CFR 1910.120(q)(9)(i) for all pipeline response personnel that may be expected to work in the Hot Zone during an emergency response. (See the attached letter dated March 3, 2008)

The above requirements could be monitored as part of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) system currently in place. It is our opinion that if implemented these requirements would significantly improve the readiness for response of the pipeline operators and HazMat responders.

Hillsborough County Fire Rescue will continue to assist in the preparedness for any future release as may be needed to assure the greatest level of protections to the population and environment. Thank you once again for the opportunity to testify and for your interest. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have at the appropriate time.